



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Office of Justice Programs

*Office for Victims of Crime*

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*Washington, D.C. 20531*

Dear Colleague and Friend:

The Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice is pleased to provide you with the 2003 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide. This year's theme, "Victims' Rights: Fulfill the Promise" will help commemorate the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and focus attention on what our nation must do to "fulfill its promise" of dignity and respect, of services and support, and of justice to crime victims.

It is critical that we take this opportunity to reach out to people across America and encourage *them* to reach out to victims of crime. The trauma, pain and sorrow that so many victims endure can only be alleviated by consistent acts of compassion from people who care about them, and who care about safety in our homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

This year, the Office for Victim of Crime is commemorating twenty years of service to our nation's victims and those who assist them. While OVC's accomplishments – which are highlighted throughout this Resource Guide – have been instrumental in expanding victims' rights and services, there is still much to do to ensure that we "fulfill the promises" we make to crime victims. I challenge you to consider the many barriers that victims of crime face on a daily basis, and commit to do what you can to improve their rights.

This Resource Guide is an important component of OVC's new "National Public Awareness and Education Campaign," which is designed to help promote victims' rights, victim assistance, and the many resources available from OVC to provide victims with help, hope and healing. I am confident that the contents of this Resource Guide will help you publicize victims' rights and needs not only during 2003 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, but throughout the year.

And remember, true justice cannot be achieved until victims' rights are not only celebrated annually, but practiced daily.

My staff and I send you best wishes for a highly successful commemoration of 2003 National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John W. Gillis".

John W. Gillis  
Director